

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 12434 221115Z
ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 12434

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, IN, PK, US
SUBJECT: INDIAN ACQUISITION OF THE JAGUAR: SUGGESTED ACTION

REF: ISLAMABAD 12276

SUMMARY: REFTEL OUTLINED SOME FACTORS IN PAKISTANI REACTION IF INDIA PURCHASES JAGUAR STRIKE AIRCRAFT. THE PRESENT MESSAGE, BASED ON DISCUSSIONS DURING RECENT KATHMANDU CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE, MAKES SUGGESTIONS ABOUT DISCUSSING THE MATTER FRANKLY WITH GOVT OF INDIA, PERHAPS DURING PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT. END SUMMARY.

1. IT APPEARS UNLIKELY THAT BRITISH CAN BE INDUCED TO ABANDON IDEA OF SALE OF JAGUAR AIRCRAFT TO INDIA, AT LEAST WITHOUT HIGH COST IN BILATERAL US-UK RELATIONS. INDIA HAS SEEMINGLY NOT YET MADE FINAL DECISION WHETHER TO PROCEED WITH PURCHASE AND THERE MAY BE CHANCE, ALBEIT SMALL, TO HEAD OFF THAT ESCALATORY EVENT. IN ANY CASE, FRANK AND PRIVATE DISCUSSION WITH INDIA OF USG CONCERNS IN ARMS TRANSFER FIELD WOULD SEEM TO BE IN ORDER.

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2. IF I UNDERSTOOD HIM CORRECTLY, AMB GOHEEN SEEMED TO THINK AN APPROACH TO GOI WOULD BE USEFUL, PERHAPS DURING PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT TO DELHI. AMB GOHEEN WILL WANT TO MAKE HIS OWN COMMENTS DIRECTLY TO DEPT, BUT FROM ISLAMABAD PERSPECTIVE (FOR WHATEVER THAT'S WORTH) THE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS MIGHT USEFULLY BE INCLUDED IN AN APPROACH TO INDIA.

A. USG ARMS TRANSFER POLICY GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN
MATTER OF PUBLIC RECORD. WE SEEK TO AVOID ESCALATORY
SITUATIONS, AND THEREFORE REFUSED TO SELL A-7 TO PAKISTAN.

B. USG WOULD LIKE TO SEE INDIA DIVERSIFY ITS SOURCES
OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT.

C. HOWEVER INDIAN PURCHASE OF JAGUARS, A HIGH SOPH-
ISTICATED WEAPONS SYSTEM NEW TO THE AREA, WOULD IN OUR VIEW
INTRODUCE NEW SITUATION VIS-A-VIS PAKISTAN THAT WE HOPE
GOI WILL CONSIDER CAREFULLY BEFORE MAKING FINAL DECISION.

D. USG WOULD HAVE TO REEVALUATE ARMS SALES TO PAKISTAN
IN LIGHT OF INTRODUCTION OF JAGUARS INTO SUBCONTINENT.
OTHER SUPPLIERS, PARTICULARLY WESTERN EUROPEANS, WOULD
LIKELY STEP UP THEIR SALES EFFORTS IN PAKISTAN.

E. WE BRING THIS MATTER UP IN SPIRIT OF FRANK DISCUSSION
OF AN UPCOMING SITUATION, IN FULL REALIZATION THAT WOI WILL BE
MAKING ITS OWN DECISION ON THIS MATTER.

3. EVEN IF WE DO NOT CAUSE INDIA TO REFRAIN FROM
PURCHASING JAGUARS (AND INDEED EVEN IF INDIA HAS ALREADY
DECIDED NOT TO BUY THEM) WE WILL HAVE GIVEN INDIA AN
HONEST EXPOSITION OF USG CONCERNS. WE WILL ALSO HAVE
LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR EXPLAINING TO INDIA OUR RATIONALE
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FOR WHATEVER ARMS SALES WE (OR EUROPEANS) DECIDE TO MAKE
TO PAKISTAN IN WAKE OF A JAGUAR SALE TO DELHI.
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